

Affairs subject to the following conditions:

(i) That the written consent of the veteran's nearest relative has been obtained. If the nearest relative cannot be readily contacted or refuses to consent, coupled with inability or refusal to offer adequate alternative care, the Regional Counsel may initiate the action if the petition is signed by another relative, a civil official or representative of a cooperating agency or other person authorized by State law.

(ii) If timely action cannot be taken under paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section, the Hospital or Clinic Director, or designee, may sign the petition if permissible under State law, and the Regional Counsel will then take any action necessary to bring the matter before the appropriate court.

(3) *Illegal commitment.* When a hospitalized veteran, previously committed to the Department of Veterans Affairs, demands release and continued hospitalization is necessary for the veteran's safety or the safety of others, and the Regional Counsel determines the commitment to be illegal, immediate action will be taken to obtain a legal commitment.

(4) *Restoration proceedings.* When a veteran has been a committed patient in a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital and is subsequently rated competent by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Regional Counsel upon request, may institute proceedings necessary to restore the veteran to full civil rights.

§ 14.702 Medical testimony in commitment or restoration proceedings.

(a) *Commitment.* When permissible under State law, Department of Veterans Affairs physicians, upon request of the Regional Counsel, will sign interrogatories or certificates of mental illness or insanity and, unless unavailable, as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, will testify in proceedings which the Regional Counsel is authorized to institute under § 14.701 to commit eligible veterans to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) *Restoration.* (1) When permissible under State law, Department of Veterans Affairs physicians, upon the request of the Regional Counsel, will testify in

proceedings brought for the purpose of restoring a committed veteran to full civil rights when the veteran is a committed patient in a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital.

(2) The Director of a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or the Regional Counsel upon discharge of the veteran, may furnish a certificate of sanity or such similar certificate to the proper civil authorities.

(c) *Employment of private physicians.* When testimony of Department of Veterans Affairs physicians is prohibited or is unavailable because of a duty assignment, comparative expense or other valid reason, the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, upon recommendation of the Regional Counsel, may employ any qualified physician for preliminary examination of the veteran and for testimony in any commitment or restoration proceeding which the Regional Counsel is authorized to institute under § 14.701, and authorize the payment of a fee not to exceed the prescribed fee, or in the absence thereof, the customary fee charged for the service rendered.

§ 14.703 Costs in commitment or restoration proceedings.

(a) When authorized to institute a proceeding under § 14.701, the Regional Counsel may authorize in advance or thereafter the payment or reimbursement of costs and other expenses for which the veteran is legally liable, including publication of notice necessary to accomplish the commitment.

(b) The Regional Counsel also may authorize the payment of necessary costs and expenses for which the veteran is legally liable incident to his or her restoration to full civil rights in any case in which the Regional Counsel is authorized to institute restoration proceedings under § 14.701(b)(4).

§ 14.704 Authorization of transportation necessary for commitment of a veteran beneficiary.

When a mentally ill veteran who should be committed is hospitalized by the Department of Veterans Affairs and under the law of the State wherein the hospital is located, a commitment may not be had locally, the veteran